



Arkansas Broadband Advisory Council

MEETING MINUTES NOVEMBER 27, 2007

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Ed Allis
AT&T

Greg Ashcraft
South Arkansas
Telephone Company

Dave Burdick
Pine Bluff Jefferson
County Library
System

Arl Cope
Alliance
Communications

Maryce Cunningham
Suddenlink
Communications

Jim Dailey
Flake & Kelley
Commercial

John Dreher
CenturyTel

George Hopkins, Esq.
Attorney at Law

Len Pitcock
Arkansas Cable
Telecommunications
Association

Wendy Wheeler
Alltel
Communications

James Winningham
Arkansas Insurance
Department

Meeting was called to order by James Winningham at 9:40 a.m.
at the office of the Arkansas Municipal League

1. Roll call and visitor introductions

In attendance:

Ed Allis	Jim Dailey
Greg Ashcraft	John Dreher
Dave Burdick	Len Pitcock
Maryce Cunningham	James Winningham

Absent:

George Hopkins, Esq.
Wendy Wheeler

Unable to attend due to limitations in the conference room phone system:
Arl Cope

Also in attendance:

Sam Walls III, Vice President of Connect Arkansas
Kim Tran, Arkansas Capital Corp.
Dr. Mark Peterson, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service
Melinda Kelley, Arkansas Insurance Department
Chris Hartley, Arkansas Municipal League
Michael Wallace, Lavender & Wyatt Systems, Inc.
Ricky Williams, Genesis Broadband
Dr. John Allen, Arkansas Science & Technology Authority

2. Review of minutes from previous meeting

Minutes were approved
Dave Burdick moved
Greg Ashcraft seconded

3. Connect Arkansas Update

- a. The first Connect Arkansas newsletter has been distributed.
- b. The Connect Arkansas website is up – info@connect-arkansas.com.
- c. Board of Directors growth has been suspended until Connect Arkansas has time to study how board composition may relate to eligibility for federal grants.
- d. The State of Arkansas has expressed interest in providing partial funding for the activities of Connect Arkansas and is currently searching for a source for this funding. Funding eventually will need to come from the State of Arkansas, the federal government, and the public sector – all of whom share an interest in the success of the project.
- e. A group of Connect Arkansas members is traveling to North Carolina on December 17th to review that state's broadband activities.

Arkansas Broadband Advisory Council

3. Connect Arkansas Update (continued)

- f. Mapping will be the first step in the Connect Arkansas process.
 - i. A non-disclosure agreement has been developed.
 - ii. All mapping activity is on hold until appropriate staff has been recruited and the mapping method has been finalized.
- g. The next meeting of the Connect Arkansas Board of Directors will be held on January 17, 2008.
- h. James Winningham informed the group that, with the current wording of Sen. Pryor's iBRANCH amendment to the Farm Bill, Connect Arkansas would be eligible to apply for a grant if that legislation is passed.
- i. Kim Tran reported that the initiative has the support of Sen. Blanche Lincoln, who is particularly interested in tele-health.

4. Status of action items

- a. A videoconference with a staff member of Sen. Mark Pryor's office will be held during ABAC's next meeting on December 18th to update ABAC members on federal activities relevant to broadband.
- b. A draft press release giving background information on ABAC, a list of its members, an invitation for public attendance and comment, an announcement of the meeting with Sen. Pryor's staff, and the website listing was distributed for Council members' review and comments. Following final approval, this release will be distributed to all Arkansas newspapers.
- c. Responses to contacts for Council administrative and financial support
 - 1) Given the limited resources available and the numerous demands, no financial assistance is likely from the Governor's office.
 - 2) Arkansas Capital Corp. will provide administrative assistance.
- d. Web site
 - 1) INA has expressed a willingness to provide assistance with creation of ABAC's web site.
 - 2) DIS will provide support for domain name registration.

5. Draft of initial report to the Governor and Legislative Council

James Winningham circulated a draft Summary of the Council's Initial Report. General discussion was then held on various additions and changes that would provide further information and clarification on the state's current situation and what ABAC's goals and expectations will be during its tenure, such as:

- a. Need to further differentiate between Connect Arkansas and the ABAC
- b. Specificity on the need for funding for Connect Arkansas, not ABAC. Funding is important to and needed by both, but the Council thinks it wise to focus on funding for Connect Arkansas until such funding is found.
- c. Emphasis on the importance of the "digital highway" in the state
- d. Inclusion of references to additional states' activities and progress through mapping and surveying
- e. Current data regarding the state of broadband in Arkansas and other states is dated and, therefore, potentially inaccurate – more current data is vitally important
- f. Need accurate Arkansas data regarding coverage, speed of access, and take-rate (actual subscriptions to service)
- g. Businesses cases, not just incentives for businesses improvement, would be helpful to move project forward
- h. A small sample project might demonstrate the value of the statewide effort
- i. A breakdown of 1) time frames, 2) amounts, 3) phases of the project, and 4) what each phase will cost would be a powerful demonstrative tool

Arkansas Broadband Advisory Council

5. Draft of initial report to the Governor and Legislative Council (continued)
 - j. East Labs has conducted surveys in six counties to identify the current level of broadband coverage; however, surveys are needed to register the requirements needed to satisfy the demand
5. Draft of initial report to the Governor and Legislative Council
 - k. James, who was applauded for his work on the draft, will re-work to include the various suggestions and re-distribute prior to the next ABAC meeting
6. Comments regarding the RTC Conference report from Jim Dailey

Jim Dailey reiterated the information presented in his report and the value of attending such events. He also emphasized the importance of the work that is being done to not only provide information about the state of the state, but also to improve the quality of life in Arkansas.
7. Any Comment by the Public
 - a. Chris Hartley stated that he was pleased to have had the opportunity to learn about ABAC's work and offered the resources and contacts of the Municipal League.
 - b. Michael Wallace offered resources for medical data and information and suggested that funding might be available through the Department of Commerce or the USDA.
 - c. Dr. Mark Peterson expressed his appreciation for the Council's efforts and reiterated how much local leaders are looking forward to the results of the mapping and surveys.
8. Other matters of business
 - a. The advisability of designating a Media Spokesperson for the Council was discussed. It was decided that, given the background and experience of the members of the Council, a media spokesperson is unnecessary. The website will contain most relevant information, and Council members will avoid speaking on behalf of the entire Council except on matters already decided upon in Council meetings. All Council members will be informed of the Council's activities and also advised of any media interest.
 - b. Federal Universal Service grant process recommendations were due on November 20. A revised, long-term policy will be announced following the review of comments, but the current recommendations of the Joint and State Board on the Universal Service Fund would divide the current fund into three funds, one of which will be a broadband fund.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

Jim Dailey moved.

Ed Allis seconded.

Respectfully submitted,

Maryce J. Cunningham
Secretary

